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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RULERS FOR THE DISTURBANCES IN CHINA.

BY LIEUTENANT CARLYON BELLAIRS, R. N.

CHINA is the land of contradictions, where the unexpected happens simply because its underlying paradox is the contrast between reality and appearance. It is true that there is a huge agricultural population, which for straightforwardness in many respects will compare favorably with any similar population in the world. The profound indifference, however, of this class to all outside questions, so long as it is left undisturbed to till the soil, sets it apart altogether from the immediate problems that confront us. Whether it is a matter of diplomacy or business, the Chinaman with whom we have to deal always wears a mask of inert prejudice tempered by suave politeness; so that the longer one is in contact with the race the more one is struck with its immobility.

To peer behind the mask, we must have recourse to statistics and visit British settlements, like Hong Kong, Singapore, and Penang. Then we discover in the Chinaman an active rival, who is almost too progressive for our tastes. Being a born trader, he is gradually monopolizing the land and its business, so that one is not surprised to find that the chief complaint running through the last files of the *China Mail* is that at Hong Kong the European will soon have no room to live. The work of governing, the Chinaman is content to leave to the British. The administration goes on with comparative smoothness, just as was the case in the Anglo-French occupation of Canton for nearly four years, from January 5, 1858, to October 21, 1861. All goes well, until the guilds or the mandarins who can influence the people are of opinion that a grievance will pay. The underlying motive is always money, though every side-wind, from superstition to racial prejudice, is enlisted in the winning of it. The fact is that, in lust for

money, the Jew is not to be compared with the "heathen Chinese." When the latter is not working for money he is amusing himself by gambling for it.

It is much the same with the rulers and *literati* of China. As is the case in Turkey, this policy may be hostile to the interests of the people, and it may be the old familiar one of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. The aged mandarins know, however, that man's life is limited, and they are by no means the first to have cried, "After us, the deluge." They have a conviction that a firm footing for the foreigners is only a preliminary to their own eviction, under what has been styled, in European diplomacy, "the Bag and Baggage Policy." Hence, their readiness to alienate territory rather than to open up the country as a whole, and hence much of the success of Russian diplomacy, which has nothing to gain by the opening up of China. The difficulties which a viceroy can throw in the way of trade are for him so many gates, for the passing of which he can exact toll. The mask of ignorance and prejudice is adopted of set purpose, though a mandarin is quite as well able as a director of the Standard Oil Trust to persuade himself that he always acts in the best interests of the people. This policy is so successful that the talk in England has generally been of "the necessity of gentleness in dealing with so ancient a civilization." "We are anxious," said Lord Salisbury, "if possible, that the interference of foreign nations shall be limited to that encouragement of domestic improvements which foreign nations have such enormous powers of giving."* If Lord Salisbury means the sort of encouragement we have been giving during the last four years, launching the Emperor on a path of reform and then leaving him to appeal in vain to Great Britain for support, then truth compels us to state that we might just as well argue with a Chinese lamp on its special function of giving out light.

After the usurpation of all authority by the Dowager Empress we find Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain successively snubbed by China. "The Powers of Europe," says Mr. H. S. Hallett, "either from mutual antagonism or owing to the rapid increase of China's drilled forces and modern armament, were apparently cowed by China's truculent attitude."† That courag-

*"The Times," May 18, 1898 (speech in the House of Lords).

†"The Times," June 25, 1900.

eous attitude it has been the mistaken policy of most Englishmen, like Lord Salisbury and Lord Charles Beresford, to encourage. We have bombarded the Taku forts three times, and still we cannot learn that militarism, at its best a necessary evil, is, in the hands of a reactionary government, prone to rely on shams, the worst evil of all. From a strong, growing nation, like Russia, it is, of course, absurd to exact conditions, as British statesmen attempted to do when they stipulated against the creation of arsenals in the Black Sea. With the Chinese, from whom we ought to have exacted such conditions, we have travelled far in the opposite direction. What we require from the Chinese is a military police, preserving and tending to develop the work of the imperial maritime customs. The Japanese are keen judges of character, and long years ago fathomed the imposture of China. They were right about its military strength, when all Europe was wrong. They have no less surely measured its moral strength. Hence they are accused of being brusque in their dealings with Chinese rulers, and cautioned against the foolish confidence of a nation which revolutionized its policy before it had time to change its dress. Even Lord Charles Beresford, in his "Break-Up of China," finds fault with the British Government on one occasion for pressing a just claim with some harshness. If Lord Charles had been the British representative and sat down to argue the matter out with the different mandarins to whom he would be referred, he would be sitting down to this day. The Chinese proverb that ceremony is the smoke of friendship has its application in the ways of Chinese statesmen.

In all dealings with China, the personal responsibility of the leaders or rulers is the chief thing to bear in mind. To hang them is to outrage civilized sentiment. They can be punished in other ways. They must be brought to understand thoroughly that the old policy will no longer pay them personally. They have in their hands enormous powers. They can chop off heads, as a mere matter of policy, without regard to the innocence of the owners of the heads. They have before now shown that, if they choose to exert their powers, they can do so with effect. They can raise or quell the anti-foreign outbreaks. Disturbances similar to the present were raised before the China-Japan war, but with the outbreak of war the rulers found it convenient to avoid offending European powers, the inflammatory placards and books were

withdrawn, and the people resumed their former friendly relations with foreigners. The people are turbulent, say the mandarins, well knowing that horrible charges against the missionaries are being circulated with their connivance. The people are very superstitious about spirits wherever a railway is promoted. The reason is self-evident; for, when the mandarins are propitiated or given a due sense of expediency, then the spirits wax propitious, and the people give no thought to the breaking up of railways or the tearing up of telegraph poles. After the massacres of 1891, a British Consul, Mr. Gardner, charged certain mandarins with having inspired the anti-foreign crusade. Sir Halliday Macartney, who is of English birth, but is in the Chinese Legation as a Chinese subject, was able to effectually shield them by the usual Chinese methods. Consequently, they and others are able to repeat their diabolical work in 1895, and again in 1900.

To enable pressure to be applied to China, *The Times* advocates Gordon's policy of shifting the seat of government to some position readily accessible to the maritime or trading Powers, so that the policy of firm persuasion may be exercised at all times. The necessity of this the Japanese clearly appreciate in the light of their own history. Their capital was easily accessible in the days when reaction and reform were at issue. There were similar outbreaks against foreigners in Japan in the sixties of the present century. In 1861 there was a "palace revolution," as the British representative, Sir R. Alcock, termed it in his official dispatch. It was followed, says the dispatch, by the reformers being "driven from their posts into disgrace and exile." There were outbreaks and murders after the Mikado had, in 1862, ordered the Shogun to "expel foreigners." Civil war was imminent all over Japan in 1863 and 1864. In September, 1864, the allied forces of France, Great Britain, the United States and the Netherlands destroyed the batteries of Choshu, so as to force Japan to reopen the Straits to the Inland Sea. By 1865, the so-called anti-foreign movement was moribund. The concert of the Powers succeeded then, as it succeeded in Crete, through decisive action. The Mikado made the cause of reform his own; and the same process can be repeated in China by the Son of Heaven. The decisive action *must*, however, be successful, as a temporary check involves immense loss of prestige. In Crete we had to apply the "bag and baggage" policy to the Turkish garrison. China can

be no less surely cured of its maladies by depriving the rulers of their opportunities for evil, as has been done in Egypt. There we have set up an *imperium in imperio*, and the same thing, as Mr. Valentine Chirol ably points out,* practically exists to-day in China in the imperial maritime customs established by Prince Kung in 1862. Ruled by Europeans and Americans, it affords a strong contrast with the Chinese Tsung-li-Yamên, or Department of Foreign Affairs, created at the demand of Great Britain and France after the occupation of Peking by the allies in October, 1860. There is not a solitary voice raised to deny the good work done by Sir Robert Hart. This work can be done again in other directions by men like Sir Thomas Jackson, if they put their shoulders to the wheel while in the prime of life and are prevented by wise foresight from spoiling the edifice of their work by remaining beyond their time.

One cannot repeat too often that China is a country that cries aloud for leadership and seldom gets it, where good or evil broadens downward from the rulers to the people. More than any other country, it suffers from the blighting hand of the old man in its administration. In her case, unfortunately, the hand is an avaricious one. Since Confucius taught that old men should be held in an esteem which is almost worship, they are enabled to keep their posts when vigor can no longer be looked for. Old men can be trusted to sit still, and certainly they have succeeded in China. Pascal held that most of the evils of life arise from the inability of man to sit still. The Chinese statesman acts as if he believed that all the evils of life arise from this cause. To encourage him to shut not one eye only, but both eyes, is the aim of Muscovite diplomacy. To worry him with pin pricks appears to be the British ideal. He has now been worried into action, and therein lies the second application of Pascal's saying. Since British statesmen refused to act courageously, the reactionary party under the Empress Dowager has been given enough rope to hang itself. Hitherto the Chinese people, and not the government, have been punished by the Powers, and in such a way that the rulers have ever been able to turn the resentment of the people against the foreigners. So things have gone from bad to worse, while huge trading interests have been built up before even provision had been made for safeguarding them.

*"The Far Eastern Question," V. Chirol.

While deploring the loss of life during the long period of half-measures, we may say that the future outlook is hopeful. The Empress Dowager has hopelessly compromised the present system by open encouragement given to the Boxers, whose motto is to "Uphold the dynasty and drive out the foreigners." This has drawn the arms of the civilized Powers into China. The salvation of China may lie in the strength of an alliance which unites under a motto so opposed to the Boxers' motto, as "Never again." It was a President of the United States who said that to secure the repeal of a bad law it must be enforced. The bad system of Chinese government has been allowed the latitude which has made its evil crop manifest. Not even Li Hung Chang, with the support of Russia, and with all the skill that enables him to address the world on the iniquity of trading in opium, while insiders know that China is stained with his poppy fields, can save the present system of misgovernment, if Great Britain, the United States, Japan and Germany decide that the Bag and Baggage policy must be applied. That is a method which has ever been effectual, whether applied to the Crown of England in the Declaration of Independence, to Spain in her colonies, or by the British Government to the East India Company in India.* On one point let us not deceive ourselves. To talk about the capture of the Taku forts as "impressing the Chinese mind" is, in the light of history, the vainest of vain dreams. Troops can march to Peking and withdraw, and the rulers will save their "face" by announcing to the people that the foreign devils came as vassals to pay tribute. To this day the greater part of China has probably never heard of the war with Japan. The process of impressing the people is a game at which we can always be beaten unless we impress the people through their rulers.

"The only hope," said Lord Salisbury, "for the well-being of the people and for the growth of industry and commerce must be a reform in the government of the Chinese people themselves."† All of us can agree with this, but it was the excess of futility to add "that in the prosecution of this reform they must be protected,

*A parallel can be drawn between the persistence of the Chinese Government in excluding trade and the similar policy pursued by the East India Co. in India at the beginning of the century. The Company was content to raise revenues, and maintained that there were no opportunities for trading. The British Government forced the Company to open the Indian ports, and when the Company had failed in the Indian Mutiny to maintain law and order, it was shorn of its remaining powers.

†"The Times," May 18, 1898 (speech in the House of Lords).

so far as we can protect them, from any external interference." With such a plain intimation of non-intervention, the Peking schemers started reforming according to their own ideas. More than once *The Times*, and its able Peking correspondent, pointed out that a Boxer movement was the probable outcome of the *coup d'état* by which the Emperor was deposed and the Reform Party driven out of power. It seems incredible that any one could suppose that, having knocked down the chimneys of the structure that they wished to raze to the ground, the reactionary party would be content with their folly like schoolboys at play. The party was in deadly earnest and had merely whetted its appetite.*

That the life of the Emperor was spared may have been due to the spontaneous outbreak of an unusual public opinion, petition after petition being sent to Peking from the younger mandarins and progressive Chinese communities. The crusade against the reformers, however, became more ominous, and it was on June 1st that Sir Claude MacDonald demanded the reason for the impeachment of three Chinamen who were charged with having been concerned in obtaining commercial concessions for foreigners. Then events followed each other with the rapidity we are led to expect only on prepared stages.

Skobelev's saying with reference to Central Asia is true of China: "The position of affairs changes not every hour, but every minute. Therefore, I say vigilance, vigilance, vigilance." The changes this time were rung so as to shock all the great Powers into a sense of common danger. The story of the Legation guards and Seymour's forlorn hope is known to all. "It is will, decision, and audacity, which succeeds in the East," says the *Spectator*. Will and decision would have taken the lead that belongs of right to the country holding three-fifths of the trade. To withdraw the Ambassador from his humiliating position of making ineffectual protests to a lying court, to have brought Indian troops to Kowloon, and finally to have invited Japan to

*The following extract from Lord Salisbury's famous speech on China, in which he referred to "the dying nations," is interesting in connection with the above. He said: "In them [the dying nations] misgovernment is not only not cured, but is constantly on the increase. The society and official society, the administration, is a mass of corruption, so that there is no firm ground on which any hope of reform or restoration could be based, and in their various degrees they are presenting a terrible picture to the more enlightened portion of the world—a picture which, unfortunately, the increase in the means of our information and communications draws with darker and more conspicuous lineaments in the face of all nations, appealing to their feelings as well as to their interests, calling upon them to bring forward a remedy."

send 20,000 men into camp at Wei-Hai-Wei, that would have been evidence of will and decision. To bring affairs to such a pass that we have to send small bodies of men from the fleets, so that they have to depend for their existence on local supplies and are liable to be starved by the mere passive obstruction of the Chinese, that is a form of audacity with which we are unfortunately familiar as leading to the exhaustion of "a dying nation."

Lord Salisbury has declared "that what China wants is courage; and one of my defenses of the occupation of Wei-Hai-Wei is that it has a tendency to strengthen China against despair and to give her courage, if the occasion should arise, *to stand up against* her enemies.* So far as the writer can judge, not one of the dying nations has lacked courage. Indeed, for a period we see China audaciously defying the world in arms, and Lord Salisbury will hardly felicitate himself by attributing the inspiration to our occupation of Wei-Hai-Wei. The country that has conspicuously lacked courage in her treatment of the problem of China has been Great Britain. Lord Salisbury said of his predecessor's conduct of affairs that "he should have doubted the wisdom of this country standing by and seeing Russia and her allies, France and Germany, driving Japan out of the Liao-Tung Peninsula without taking some security that Russia was not doing that with a view to future operations." This criticism is just, but we may well ask what Lord Salisbury did when those future operations came. The story of how the Government authorized the withdrawal of the British ships from Port Arthur in deference to Russia's protest, and how the occupation of Port Arthur and Ta-lien-wan followed, is too well known to need recapitulation. The writer, from personal experience, can answer for our loss of prestige and the humiliated feelings of the British sailors. Why was it done, unless from want of courage? Lord Salisbury himself said after the event that "there was no more effective method of driving them (the Chinese) to despair than allowing Port Arthur to be occupied by the Power which already stands over so enormous a portion of the frontier, and threatens them with so large a conquest."†

*"The Times," May 13, 1898.

†The official representative in the Foreign Office in the House of Commons, Mr. Curzon, said on February 8, 1898, that "the right to send ships of war to Port Arthur is a right which we enjoy together with other Powers under the Treaty of Tientsin, and when the occasion arises we shall do it again." The request of Russia that the two British cruisers should be withdrawn was as cool a piece of impudence as President

The most noteworthy fact of the present situation is that all the great nations have interfered in China, and can all claim, under the principle of "the stricken field" or the sacrifices that have been made, a voice in the settlement. If the court is at Peking the settlement is close at hand, and an initial victory can be obtained by breaking down the ceremony which surrounds it—that ceremony which is "the smoke of friendship." As regards compensation for losses incurred and punishment of high officials, the Powers may be expected to act more or less in unison. It is when the question of reform is raised that hostile camps are likely to be formed, and delays will be dangerous. We know that an honest government, with some security of tenure and bent on maintaining law and order, is essential to safe trading. Unfortunately, the history of French diplomacy in Morocco and Russian diplomacy in Turkey and Persia, shows that a weak reactionary government may be preferred by nations bent on turning the situation to their own advantage. If, however, the Emperor is alive at Peking, and, under the advice of the reformers and the guarantees of the trading Powers he elects to shift the capital to Nanking, it is difficult to see how Russian influence can checkmate the decision. We must, however, be prepared to deal in no tender spirit with any viceroys fomenting disturbances for the purpose of influencing his decision.

The antagonism between the Powers in this matter must come to light. In an appreciation of Russian diplomacy in this REVIEW for June, a writer says that "the diplomatist develops into perfection and blossoms most in the midst of ignorance, degradation and corruption." Russian agents have free hands and do not show them, though it does not take much study of their methods and that ambiguous proposition, the Russo-Chinese Bank, to conclude that one hand threatens and the other bribes. China as at present circumstanced is a peculiarly favorable field for such methods. To change these deplorable conditions is the instinctive desire of the trading Powers. It can only be done by a more

Krüger's ultimatum, having in view that Port Arthur was a Chinese port. As a naval officer, I know that the foundation of our naval policy is to "shadow" an enemy, the shadowing being commenced in time of peace with the view of bringing the enemy to action as soon as war breaks out. That policy has necessitated our ships following Russian ships during peace over thousands of miles of water and never losing sight of them. This being our fixed and indispensable naval policy, it was with a feeling of utter despair that we realized that Lord Salisbury had acquiesced in Russia's right to protest against British vessels being at anchor in a neutral port at the same time as her own. The sequel showed the folly of breaking with a well-tried policy.

courageous statesmanship than we have been accustomed to from "the mandarins of Downing street," as *The Times* calls the British Foreign Office. They have hitherto been so nervous of Russian diplomacy that an agreement has never been reached. Much of the antagonism lies in the history of the past, during which the statesmanship of the two countries has worked in a vicious circle. The methods of Russia create universal distrust. On the other hand this distrust induced Great Britain to place herself athwart Russia's vast, civilizing mission in Asia. It is impossible, and it ought not to be possible, to block a nation adding two millions yearly to her population, and with a huge territory in Asia, from access to the sea. These two antagonistic policies have bred each other's increase. We have already instanced the Port Arthur episode. The Russian Minister had prepared Peking for what was to happen. "My master," he said in effect, "is going to order the English out of Port Arthur." "The loss of British prestige," said a high official to the writer, "was terrible."

Korea is another instance of shuffling on both sides. Russia bound herself not to touch Korean territory, but the agreement was a verbal one and with China. This absurdity was reached by Great Britain carrying matters to the very verge of war. The latest Russian move for the lease of over 400 acres in a Korean port sweeps away all doubt as to the scope embraced by her diplomatic net. We can let the matter rest as a war issue until the reformed government is established in China. It will then be time enough to demonstrate to that government the strength of the maritime Powers by a guarantee of Korean territory. If Russian soldiers have been landed, Russia can be invited to withdraw them and to join in the agreement. A refusal must, of course, be followed by their eviction.

Korea is the natural outlet for Japan's expanding population and the future source of her food supply. Japan is under no illusions as to Russia's strength. Some time back the Marquis Ito visited Russia. On his return, a friend of the writer asked him what would happen when Japan and Russia fought. The great man threw out his arms and said with emphasis, "We will walk through them." At that time corruption was known to vitally affect Russia's armed forces, but we had not before us the Black Sea scandals, which brought some fifty or sixty responsible naval officials before a secret court-martial. Apart from this, the Jap-

anese count on actual physical superiority. If their officers lack the advantage of a high tradition, they have on the other hand the highest possible sense of personal honor in the service of their country, and the freshness of their army and navy has spared them from that dead weight of conservatism which causes so much that is obsolete to be retained. If Great Britain does not actively assist the Japanese they rely on her to hold back France and to rigidly enforce the treaty provisions which *prevent the Russian Black Sea Fleet from passing through the Dardanelles*. They are under no illusions as to the Siberian railway and its branches, extending to over 5,000 miles. It runs through country where their secret service can work, and where a small bribe can induce men to again and again risk their lives to wreck the railway until such time as they can land their forces. When Russia fights in the Far East it will be on the basis of her Eastern Siberian armies and their accumulated supplies. Including over 30,000 in garrison at Vladivostock, and allowing for railway employees and emigrants with military training, we may estimate these forces at about 150,000 men. The relative proportion of forces makes it probable that Japan will obtain command of the sea. Indeed, apart from the use of a sea base to terrorize China, the feverish defensive preparations at Port Arthur are due to the knowledge that either Japan or Great Britain can sweep the Russian fleet off the sea.* Hence the enormous stores of grain, tinned meats, and bullion which *The Times* correspondent says are being accumulated at Port Arthur, while 90,000 coolies are working on the fortifications. To wage war without success is, however, worse than futile. If, then, Japan can secure her sea communications and strike when she wills with ultimately five army corps in the field, it is difficult to see what Russia can hope for if she does not obey the mandate of the maritime Powers, including Japan.

The fact is Russia aims at achieving her conquests chiefly by peaceful methods. In twelve years' time it is hoped that the Siberian railway will be a double line. The sooner the better. The world is under a debt of obligation for this great feat, which, as a single line, will have cost nearly 400 million dollars. It is with a feeling of profound thankfulness that one reflects how this civilizing work might have been lost, and thirty battleships and

*Such detailed accounts of the forces in the Far East have already been published, that the writer has omitted to set these figures out afresh.

their crews provided in its place, a programme which would have gone far to redress for a time the grave handicap under which Russia must always lie through the want of continuity of her coast line. It is with a feeling of utter dismay that one contemplates this vast industrial work being shattered by war, at a time when Russia sorely needs Anglo-Saxon capital to reap the reward of her labors. It would seem, therefore, that Russia has every inducement to conciliate the rich maritime Powers until such time as it can no longer be said that she has bitten off in Asia "more than she can chew." One cannot conceal, however, the gravity of the coming crisis, if there is any ambiguity in the position of some of the Powers. The Crimean War need never have occurred had Prussia joined with the Franco-English alliance. So there may be war. No greater mistake could be made than to suppose that the British people, disgusted at the practical failure of their expectations in South Africa, will be chary of maintaining a strong policy in China for fear of a war with Russia. The experience of South Africa has given them the idea that India is invulnerable on the land side. They have astonished themselves with the large military forces they have put in the field. They have emerged from the war with an empire welded together, and with a military prestige which they had hitherto lacked. They are conscious that they will not act alone, and are united in support of a strong policy for reasons which can now be stated.

Great Britain's chief concern with foreign nations, said Cobden, is to trade with them. British subjects in all parts of the world attach unusual importance to the China trade. In China, then, "our chief concern" is deeply involved, for in 1899 we had over sixty-three per cent. of the trade, and sixty-one per cent. of the shipping entering the treaty ports. This being so, the Cobden or Manchester school, which has usually opposed a strong policy, will in this case be as deeply moved to support it. Throughout the Far East, the words China and trade are convertible terms with the Anglo-Saxon race. Talk to a Russian about China, and his discourse will be of territory and four thousand miles of frontier. Talk to a Frenchman, and he will tell you of Destiny, of the Divine task of protecting the missionaries (whom he has turned out of his own country), and of the sacrifices France has made in building up Indo-China. The Anglo-Saxon, on the other

hand, tells you he wants trade and he means to get it. But how? Here is a list of the requirements of the situation:

- (1.) The breaking down of court etiquette.
- (2.) The transfer of the capital to the seaboard.
- (3.) Administrative reform.
- (4.) (a) A Revenue-Board under Europeans or Americans.
(b) A Board of Communications with departments modeled on the plan of the Suez Canal Directorate.
(c) An international tribunal for the settlement of claims against China.
- (5.) The complete opening of all ports under the Imperial Maritime Customs.
- (6.) The abolition of *likin* or inland duties.
- (7.) The right to be conceded to all races to hold property and to carry on business throughout China.
- (8.) The acquirement by China, under the Board of Communications, of all railways through its territory.

These requirements mentioned above are goals to be reached, but those who travel along the path of reform know that the start is everything. It was America that commenced the reform movement in Japan by military pressure. By peaceful diplomacy Mr. John Hay obtained the signatures of the nations to that Magna Charta of China, the Open Door Policy, or equal trading rights for all. Now, if there is any truth in the saying that in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king, then, if lust of territory blinds others to the interests of humanity, America should be able to intervene with great effect. To open up a thickly populated territory, larger than the United States and containing in its soil coal-beds estimated to cover twenty times the area of those of Great Britain, that will be one of the grandest diplomatic triumphs the world has ever seen. The issue is possibly even larger. If the impress of the West on the East is to be Anglo-Saxon, it must be the joint work of the two great branches of the race. And the extent of Anglo-Saxon and Slavonic influence in reconstructed China is to be largely determined in the next three months.

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